

Rights Group to Head Video Game Fight

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Seizing the opportunity to forge a more aggressive profile, the Oklahoma City Human Rights Commission on Monday agreed to become the "umbrella organization" for those groups fighting distribution of adult video games.

The move was taken at the request of chairman Phyllis Sapp, who told commission members that those opposed to a video game called "Custer's Revenge" needed a clearinghouse agency to coordinate efforts against what some have labeled a sexist and racist diversion cashing in on the booming video game market.

The object of the "Custer's Revenge" video game is to couple a near-naked Gen. Custer with an Indian woman.

"We feel like the Oklahoma City Human Rights Commission really has a task to perform," Mrs. Sapp said.

"They (minority and women's groups) feel this is a way to give the Human Rights Commission an opportunity to be the service to pull together the agencies that need to work together," she said.

"The Human Rights Commission has been thought of as a passive organization," she added. Coordinating the fight against "Custer's Revenge" could make the commission a more active participant in city affairs, Mrs. Sapp said.

Though the commission was unanimous in its condemnation of the game, some members thought pressing legal remedies might be more effective than resolutions and statements of indignation.

"I'm afraid that it will receive notoriety and people will want to see it," the Rev. Louis Scagnelli said of the uproar over the game.

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The law must be brought to bear in some fashion, Scagnelli said, "otherwise, people will say this is just a bunch of people talking, just some old ladies in tennis shoes."

Meanwhile, the Oklahoma City Council will vote today on whether to adopt a resolution declaring "Custer's Revenge" and other adult video games to be "distasteful" and "not in the best interests of the community."

The resolution, proposed by Ward 1 Councilman Bob McCoy, concludes that "the distribution of said games within the city would be undesirable."

The legal question of whether the City Council can ban local sales of "Custer's Revenge" or any other product is still being pondered by City Attorney Walter Powell.

"And he (Powell) is going to have real problems making a ruling until he's seen it," said McCoy, who also is a lawyer. "But in the meantime, I couldn't see any reason why the City Council couldn't express its opinion."

Ward 8 Councilman Bob Frank predicted Monday that the resolution would be unanimously approved.

"I'd say it will sail right on through," Frank said. "The game is in very bad taste but there's very little we can do. We've got adult book shops, porno shops and head shops, you know, that don't give a tinker's damn about what the City Council does."

Ward 5 Councilman Jim Scott said he would vote for the resolution.



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"We run into trouble with the courts on things like this," Scott said. "But if we can just hold it to the adult book stores rather than open it up to Sears and other stores, we've accomplished something."

Plans to market the game nationwide for Christmas sales were announced Oct. 13 in New York City by the manufacturer.

Atari Inc., a leading manufacturer of home-video equipment, filed suit Oct. 15 against American Multiple Industries of Northridge, Calif., manufacturer of "Custer's Revenge," and the distributor, Mystique. BIOG: NAME:

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